

# Asheville Area Comprehensive Wayfinding Program Buncombe County, NC

## Request for Qualifications

**November 29, 2006**

**Submittal Address:** Cate Marvill  
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Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau  
36 Montford Avenue  
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**Submittal Deadline:** December 29, 2006

**Inquiries:** All inquiries and questions about this proposal must be submitted in writing by email to Cate Marvill at the following address: [cmarvill@exploreasheville.com](mailto:cmarvill@exploreasheville.com).

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### Introduction

The Asheville, NC Area Partnership on Wayfinding (POW) Task Force is seeking Statements of Qualifications to develop and implement a comprehensive wayfinding and signage program for the City of Asheville, NC and surrounding area within Buncombe County. Based on the initial Statement of Qualifications, a select number of firms will be invited to Asheville to interview and to present a wayfinding proposal to the task force. Following the interview process, a firm will be selected and asked to submit a detailed proposal and scope of work for plan development and project implementation.

The consultant or consultant team must demonstrate experience managing and implementing successful wayfinding programs with a scope and focus similar to what is desired for the Asheville area. Consultants should demonstrate expertise in all aspects of wayfinding and district identification, as well as an understanding of destination branding, destination management, marketing, tourism economies, and standards for transportation signage.

### Background

Located in the Southern Appalachian mountains, the Asheville area has long been known for destinations such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, Biltmore Estate, the Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa and the Pisgah National Forest. In 2005, an estimated 8.4 million visitors frequented the Asheville area. In recent years, Asheville has received national attention as a top destination for the arts and has been recognized as one of the most desirable places to live in the country.

For more information on the Asheville area visit: [www.exploreasheville.com](http://www.exploreasheville.com)

"Asheville skipped the urban renewal process that most downtowns went through. Today, its rich architectural legacy with its mix of Art Deco, Beaux Arts and Neoclassical styles is the perfect backdrop to the edgy energy that emanates from the locally owned-shops and galleries, distinctive restaurants and exciting entertainment venues. Known as an art colony, a healing resort, home to notable luminaries, statesmen and bohemians, Asheville is one of the most welcoming, vibrant cities in America" - Explore Asheville.com

## **Project Description and Goals**

The Asheville Area POW Task Force seeks to develop a comprehensive wayfinding system that facilitates wayfinding throughout the Asheville area, while enhancing the sense of direction and developing themes in keeping with the city's history and character. This wayfinding signage system should address the needs of visitors and residents using all modes of transportation. Street level vitality, legibility, safety, maintenance and replacement costs are all major concerns in creating an informational signage and wayfinding system.

The program should consider a variety of signage needs including, but not limited to:

- Interstate and highway signage and directions
- General directional information and wayfinding, pedestrian and vehicular
- Gateways
- Trailblazers
- Retail merchant sign design guidelines
- Attractions signage
- Cultural districts branding and identification
- Public parking signage
- Interpretive signage for historic areas
- Cultural and entertainment venues
- Institutional signage – hospitals, universities, airport
- Kiosks/ Information centers
- Significant public buildings

Some specific goals for the Asheville Area Comprehensive Wayfinding Program include:

- Regional information at key decision points to guide travelers to districts and destinations, and attractions from interstate and intrastate highways.
- Creation of identities for the major cultural districts such as Downtown Asheville, Biltmore Village, and the River Arts District, while maintaining consistent themes and standards.
- As a first phase, implementation of effective signage for public parking in downtown Asheville, including vehicular signage to and from parking garages, and pedestrian signage within parking decks and throughout the downtown.
- Review, coordination and consolidation of existing directional signage throughout the area, including recommendations for removal of unnecessary or redundant signage
- Signage and visual clues that facilitate ease of travel throughout the region and from one district to another.
- Definition of roles and responsibilities for various agencies responsible for implementation and maintenance.
- A plan for ongoing maintenance and sign replacement including estimates of an annual maintenance budget, and strategies for graffiti removal.
- Recommendations for ordinances for private-sector signs in pedestrian districts that will allow flexibility and visibility while maintaining aesthetic standards.

- A program that pays special attention to cultural identity, history, the destination brand, and plans for economic development and redevelopment.

In this project, the POW Task Force expects the consultant to develop a process to work cooperatively with all involved stakeholders to develop the wayfinding program. Some of these stakeholders include, but are not limited to: The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority and its contract agent, the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau; the City of Asheville; Buncombe County government; the Towns of Black Mountain, Weaverville, Woodfin, and Biltmore Forest; the North Carolina Department of Transportation; Asheville Regional Airport; and representatives of cultural districts and area destinations.

### **Submittal Format and Procedures**

Consultants or consultant teams are requested to prepare a statement of qualifications for submittal to the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau. In order to be considered responsive to this RFQ, each proposal must conform to the following requirements. The consultant shall submit four (4) copies of the proposal.

### **Submittal Requirements**

The Statement of Qualifications should include the following:

1. Cover Letter.
2. Introduction to the Consultant Firm(s).
3. Qualifications of the Consultant Firm(s) -- Describe experience in all areas likely to be required under this contract.
4. Project Organization (should discuss project management structure).
5. Resumes of key staff and those expected to work on the study.
6. References (provide a minimum of three).

In addition to the above requirements, the consultant teams may wish to present the following information: descriptions, sketches, photos or plans of projects of a similar nature which have been completed by each firm. Firms may also wish to provide samples of materials that have developed for public informational meetings.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Evaluation of proposals will be performed by the POW Task Force. The proposals will be evaluated on the firm's ability to meet the requirements of this RFQ. Some heavily weighted, specific evaluation criteria, among other factors, will include:

1. Quality of submission;
2. Knowledge of technical requirements;
3. Creativity and relevance of past work in tourism destinations and in specific stakeholder issues;
4. Quality and availability of staff assigned to the project;
5. Specific experience of the proposed staff;
6. Overall experience of the firm;
7. Performance on similar projects; and
8. Ability to quantify the economic impact and return on investment before and after the implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding system.

A small number of candidate firms will be asked to present their proposal to the POW Task Force before the final selection is made. Final selection and the contract with the successful consultant will be subject to approval by the POW Task Force.

## Selection Schedule

Consultant Proposals due at the CVB by 5:00pm	December 29, 2006
Consultant Initial Selection and Interviews	Jan/Feb 2007
Invitation to top two firms to submit proposals	Jan/Feb 2007
Consultant Selection	March 2007
Contract Negotiation	March 2007
Notice to Proceed	April 1, 2007

## Additional Requirements

All proposals become the property of the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) for the POW Task Force upon submission. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting statements of qualifications and proposals is the sole expense of the consultant. The Asheville CVB reserves the right to reject any and all submissions received as a result of this solicitation, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities, or to cancel the RFP in part or in its entirety. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates the POW Task Force to award a contract.

The POW Task Force will work with the selected firm or firms to finalize the scope of work, the project budget, and the final contract. In the event that the POW Task Force is unable to reach agreement with the selected consultant firm regarding scope of work and/or cost, one of the other submitters may be chosen.

The consultant shall maintain a file containing all correspondence pertaining to the project and shall document the minutes for all meetings held pertaining to the project. All documents and plans, in either paper or electronic format, shall be the property of the Asheville CVB on behalf of the POW Task Force upon completion of the project or termination of the contract.

The consultant shall submit and maintain a schedule/timeline with specified milestone dates for the project. The schedules must allow for necessary review periods for all parties involved with the project. The consultant shall submit invoices with a written, status report on each project on to the Asheville CVB project coordinator for the POW Task Force, who reserves the right to request supplemental information to ensure appropriate project progress.

The Asheville CVB requests that the prospective firms consult and adhere to the City of Asheville Minority Business Plan. The City adopted the plan to encourage participation by minority businesses in the award of contracts. *Questions regarding the Minority Business Plan may be directed to the Minority Business Program, 29 Haywood Street, Asheville, NC 28801 to Brenda Mills, Coordinator at (828) 232-4566 or <http://www.ashevillenc.gov/admin/Economic/minority.htm>.*

It is the policy of the City to (1) provide minorities an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of its contracting and procurement programs and (2) prohibit any and all discrimination against persons or businesses in pursuit of these opportunities.